

Inside the Basic Division Officer Course, Part 3

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Welcome back and I am excited to bring my final installment of the inside look to the SWOS BDOC! Once again, I’m ensign David Glaser, and this is my last post prior to graduating. Since the last installment, I’ve completed modules covering Rules of the Road, Navigation, several more C.O.V.E. scenarios, and Divisional Officer fundamentals, among other training. Having now gone through BDOC, I can give my parting thoughts on the program.

A lot of the early days of BDOC felt like I was trying catch a fire hose of knowledge in a small pail. It took time, but I was able to adjust to the pace of the course. What BDOC does well is re-enforcing knowledge that new ensigns will see on their ship, and later on SWO boards.

In total, we went through about nine C.O.V.E. scenarios with a considerable amount of time dedicated to conning. We were given plenty of opportunities to apply classroom and textbook lessons, such as Rules of the Road, in the C.O.V.E. practicing realistic situations as a conning officer. For example, I was put in a night transit scenario with multiple contacts and was tasked to apply the rules to what I saw visually and on radar. As a visual learner, the melding of classroom and simulator lessons drove home what I should be looking for and what skills I need to deliberately work to improve.

Each session was logged in our newly issued Surface Warfare Mariner Skills Logbook, providing documentation of simulator time, who the instructor was, and simulator conditions. We also were provided feedback from instructors to think about for future scenarios.

Knowledge builds confidence, and after completing BDOC I feel more confident now than I was when we started. As mentioned in my first blog, I had only spent a little time on one Navy ship prior to starting BDOC—so I was starting from scratch. The training modules have improved my ship handling capabilities, which to me seems to be the most daunting task as a junior officer. In the first C.O.V.E., I did not understand the full capabilities of how a ship handles (DDG); by the end of the last C.O.V.E., I was performing twist maneuvers using the split ship concept.

As well, gaining a solid understanding of basic divisional functions has helped me mentally prepare for my role as a divisional officer. In the last week of class, we were able to talk to command master chiefs and commanding officers from the waterfront. Our conversations ranged from how to work effectively with your chief to how to better yourself and your division.

Throughout the course, it was made clear that BDOC expectations have been raised and it’s getting harder. We were forewarned that not everyone may graduate.

As a junior officer, it doesn’t matter if you commissioned through OCS, NROTC, or the Academy, I feel BDOC gives the baseline knowledge you need to succeed, and it’s up to you to learn it. The instructors’ commitment and passion for the SWO community is apparent when they teach. I will say that they make BDOC more enjoyable.



I’m glad I attended BDOC and I know I am better for it. I not only feel I am better prepared, but I am also even more excited to report to my first ship. See you in the Fleet.

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